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EDITORIAL

Coxeyism—Irish-Bullism

By DANIEL DE LEON

Out of the woods, now so full of prophets, struts Coxeyism as the patent soluter of the knotty Social Problem; it organizes itself into a pompous attitude, and speaks this grandiloquent piece to the world:

“Had we my proposition in force, we could feel that no child of ours need ever beg bread on account of having no work to do. What would an estate of thousands of our children be compared with such a law. The estate could dwindle away, your child become a petitioner for alms. The law would exist always, and no child, so long as blessed with health, ever be other than an independent American citizen.”

The uncertainty of the future, that spectre that the modern system raises before the large majority of our people, seems to be a Socialist argument that Coxeyism has at last grasped. The duty of organized society to prevent poverty and dependence from being the lot of men and women willing to labor seems at last to be understood by Coxeyism. Thereupon Coxeyism schemes a scheme that shall remove the spectre of want and shall guarantee comfort and independence to all. And what is the scheme? To pass a law by which every citizen—presumably female as well as male—shall have an opportunity to work on the roads at the munificent wages of \$1.50 a day! The estate that Coxeyism would guarantee our people is a life-long starvation estate of \$8 a week, at the delightful and refined occupation of breaking, mending, making roads! If ever there was a tumble from the sublime to the ridiculous Coxeyism has accomplished the feat.

Socialism roars at the thought. It sees that the mechanical powers, inherited by society and produced by labor, can, under their collective ownership by the people, yield a volume of wealth fabulous to think of, at an expenditure of time that is trifling. Socialism sees an estate that is princely; it points the estate out to its heirs—the people—to its producers—the workers—and it says to them:

“That, ALL of it, you are entitled to; that, ALL of it, is yours by right; march to its conquest; you can conquer it at the hustings; and, when you shall have entered into possession, the burden of toil for a bare existence will roll from your backs; freed from the carking care of want or the fear thereof, and amply provided with the necessities of life, your poise will be that of freeman, the latent genius within you will develop, you will be progenitors of a race the like of which, for physical health, intellectual powers and moral elevation the world has never seen.”

This is the clarion blast of deliverance from the lips of that Knowledge that animates the Socialist Movement. Coxeyism’s voice is the voice of Ignorance tooting through a penny-whistle.

We have turned the telescope upon the flickering meteor of Coxeyism, and in three successive issues contemplated it from a different side.

Looked at from one side, it is a palpable dodge of Socialism.

Looked at from another, its trajectory leads to the degradation of the helot.

Looked at from a third it appears as a huge Irish bull.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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